

What is claimed is:

1. A method for implementing a computer-based product purchase and fulfillment club, comprising the steps of:

designating one or more geographic club member areas;

5 associating with each said club member area one or more consumer members who reside within said club member area and who must agree to pay a membership fee to said club;

associating with each said club member area one or more buyer members who must be prepared to work within said club member area and who must agree to pay a membership fee to said club;

10 associating with each said club member area one or more retailer members who must offer products for sale within said club member area and who must agree to pay a membership fee to said club;

providing means through an electronic communications network for said consumer members, buyer members and retailer members to access a club web site specific to said club member area and to interact with said club web site;

15 providing means through an electronic communications network for said consumer members, buyer members and retailer members to each access an individual member web page located on said club web site and personalized using parameters specific to each such consumer member, buyer member and retailer member;

20 providing means through software programming for said retailer members to offer one or more products for sale on said club web site to said consumer members;

25 providing means through software programming for said consumer members to purchase products offered for sale on said club web site;

providing means through software programming for said buyer members to be notified of purchases made by said consumer members and to offer to said retailer members to fulfill said purchases; and

30 fulfilling said purchases by having said buyer members buy said products from said retailer members, deliver said products to said consumer members to a location within said club member area within approximately thirty (30) minutes of said purchase, and collect a payment from said consumer members.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of providing telephonic means for said consumer members to purchase products offered for sale at said club web site.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of providing means through software programming for said consumer members to track the progress of fulfillment of their purchases.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of providing means through software programming for said consumer members, retailer members and buyer members to compose and post in said club web site comments regarding any element of said club or club member area.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of maintaining on said club web page a schedule of acceptable fees that may be charged by said retailer members and buying members to said consumer members and by said retailer members to said buying members.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said membership fees are paid to said club via secure funds transfer over the World Wide Web from debit facilities pre-determined with each of said consumer, buyer and retailer members.

7. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining the geographic location of said club member areas based on the likelihood of enrolling a sufficient number of consumer, buyer members based upon demographics and statistics.

8. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining the geographic location of said club member areas based on the availability of suitable wireless networking infrastructure in the candidate geographic areas.

9. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining the geographic location of said club member areas based on the number and nature of potential retailer members likely to allow competition-based incentives to drive retailer member subscription within candidate geographic areas.

10. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining the geographic location of said club member areas based on the availability of a suitable site for rental or construction of a warehouse structure centrally located within candidate geographic areas.

11. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining the geographic location of said club member areas based on refining its geometric shape to approximate a circle, by the use of extended ZIP codes falling within a pre-determined radius of the center of a candidate geographic area.

5 12. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining the geographic bounds of said club member areas based on adequate transportation infrastructure to improve the likelihood of buyer members having the ability to deliver purchases within approximately thirty (30) minutes to any point within a candidate geographic area.

10 13. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of identifying and inducing potential consumer, buyer and retailer members through active recruitment programs.

14. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of requiring potential consumer, buyer and retailer members to complete an electronic form located in said club web site and to utilize the data entered into said electronic form to automatically
15 screen said potential consumer, buyer and retailer members prior to they becoming associated with said club.

15. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of providing secure means for a person designated by said club to assist consumer members in making purchases telephonically and to initiate said purchases on behalf of said consumer members.

20 16. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of providing incentives to consumer, buyer and retailer members.

17. The method of claim 17 wherein said incentives to retailer members are based on competition between potential or existing retailer members.

25 18. The method of claim 17 wherein said incentives are purchase credits awarded to consumer members who sponsor qualified persons who become members of said club.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said incentives to buyer members are services designed to allow said buyer members to become independent business persons.

30 20. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of replicating on said club web site product information stored on a retailer member's computer.

21. The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of charging and collecting a fee from retailer members for said product information replication.

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22. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of placing advertisements on said club web site, specific to products of one or more retailer members, and collecting a fee from said retailer members for said advertisements.

5 23. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of providing means through software programming for said consumer members to search for products by designating specific retailer members within the same club member area whose products they wish to limit their search to and displaying only products available from the selected retailer members.

10 24. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of providing means through software programming for said consumer members to search for products available from said retailer members in the same club member area by selecting a product category.

15 25. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of providing means through software programming for said consumer members to search for products by first preparing a shopping list and then displaying to said consumer member products that match the list which are available from retailer members in the same club member area.

20 26. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of designating one or more buyer members "active" based on a schedule of expected purchase activity during the designation period, and requiring any such designated buyer member to fulfill and purchases made during its period of designation.

27. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of automatically selecting by use of a formula a single "active" buyer member to fulfill an order when multiple "active" members have been designated.

25 28. The method of claim 28 wherein the factors considered in said formula include the preferences of said consumer and retailer members involved in the subject order; the ability of the buyer member to transport the purchased product; the location of said buyer member in relation to the locations of said consumer and retailer members involved in the subject order and; the ability or willingness of said buyer member to
30 fulfill the subject order.

29. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of notifying buyer members of purchases made by said consumer members through wireless communication means.

30. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of implementing a Geographic Information System ("GIS") incorporating real-time Global Positioning System ("GPS") data provided through wireless means by buyer members which enables consumer members to track the exact location of ordered products.

5 31. A method for implementing a computer-based product purchase and fulfillment club, comprising the steps of:

designating one or more geographic club member areas;

associating with each said club member area one or more consumer members who reside within said club member area and who must agree to pay a membership fee to said club;

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associating with each said club member area one or more buyer members who must be prepared to work within said club member area and who must agree to pay a membership fee to said club;

associating with each said club member area one or more retailer members who must offer products for sale within said club member area and who must agree to pay a membership fee to said club;

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providing means through an electronic communications network for said consumer members, buyer members and retailer members to access a club web site specific to said club member area and to interact with said club web site;

providing means through an electronic communications network for said consumer members, buyer members and retailer members to each access an individual member web page located on said club web site and personalized using parameters specific to each such consumer member, buyer member and retailer member;

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providing means through software programming for said retailer members to offer one or more products for sale on said club web site to said consumer members;

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providing means through software programming for said consumer members to purchase products offered for sale on said club web site;

providing telephonic means for said consumer members to purchase products offered for sale at said club web site;

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providing means through software programming for said buyer members to be notified of purchases made by said consumer members and to offer to said retailer members to fulfill said purchases;

5 fulfilling said purchases by having said buyer members buy said products from said retailer members, deliver said products to said consumer members to a location within said club member area within approximately thirty (30) minutes of said purchase, and collect a payment from said consumer members.

providing means through software programming for said consumer members to track the progress of fulfillment of their purchases;

10 providing means through software programming for said consumer members, retailer members and buyer members to compose and post in said club web site comments regarding any element of said club or club member area;

maintaining on said club web page a schedule of acceptable fees that may
15 me charged by said retailer members and buying members to said consumer members and by said retailer members to said buying members, wherein said membership fees are paid to said club via secure funds transfer over the World Wide Web from debit facilities pre-determined with each of said consumer, buyer and retailer members;

determining the geographic location of said club member areas based on
20 the likelihood of enrolling a sufficient number of consumer, buyer members based upon demographics and statistics, on the availability of suitable wireless networking infrastructure in the candidate geographic areas, on the number and nature of potential retailer members likely to allow competition-based incentives to drive retailer member subscription within candidate geographic areas, on the
25 availability of a suitable site for rental or construction of a warehouse structure centrally located within candidate geographic areas, and on refining its geometric shape to approximate a circle, by the use of extended ZIP codes falling within a pre-determined radius of the center of a candidate geographic area;

determining the geographic bounds of said club member areas based on
30 adequate transportation infrastructure to improve the likelihood of buyer members having the ability to deliver purchases within approximately thirty (30) minutes to any point within a candidate geographic area;

identifying and inducing potential consumer, buyer and retailer members through active recruitment programs;

requiring potential consumer, buyer and retailer members to complete an electronic form located in said club web site and to utilize the data entered into said electronic form to automatically screen said potential consumer, buyer and
5 retailer members prior to they becoming associated with said club;

providing secure means for a person designated by said club to assist consumer members in making purchases telephonically and to initiate said purchases on behalf of said consumer members;

10 providing incentives to consumer, buyer and retailer members wherein said incentives to retailer members are based on competition between potential or existing retailer members, wherein said incentives are purchase credits awarded to consumer members who sponsor qualified persons who become members of said club, and wherein said incentives to buyer members are services designed to allow
15 said buyer members to become independent business persons;

replicating on said club web site product information stored on a retailer member's computer and charging and collecting a fee from retailer members for said product information replication;

20 placing advertisements on said club web site, specific to products of one or more retailer members, and collecting a fee from said retailer members for said advertisements;

25 providing means through software programming for said consumer members to search for products by designating specific retailer members within the same club member area whose products they wish to limit their search to and displaying only products available from the selected retailer members;

providing means through software programming for said consumer members to search for products available from said retailer members in the same club member area by selecting a product category;

30 providing means through software programming for said consumer members to search for products by first preparing a shopping list and then displaying to said consumer member products that match the list which are available from retailer members in the same club member area;

5 automatically selecting by use of a formula a single "active" buyer
member to fulfill an order when multiple "active" members have been designated
wherein the factors considered in said formula include the preferences of said
consumer and retailer members involved in the subject order; the ability of the
buyer member to transport the purchased product; the location of said buyer
10 member in relation to the locations of said consumer and retailer members
involved in the subject order and; the ability or willingness of said buyer member
to fulfill the subject order;

15 implementing a Geographic Information System (“GIS”) incorporating
real-time Global Positioning System (“GPS”) data provided through wireless
means by buyer members which enables consumer members to track the exact
location of ordered products.

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